

THE
ILL-NATUR'D MAN:

A

COMEDY,

In Two ACTS,

As it is.

As it is acted every Day in this METROPOLIS.



LONDON:

Printed in the Year MDCCLXXIII.






THE
Ill-Natur'd Man.

A C T I.

S C E N E I.

PIGTAIL and LETTICE.

PIGTAIL.

 Ndeed, Lettice, this will never do
I for me—I'll not stay another week
in his house. If he thinks I'll
put up with his abuse any longer,
he is devilishly mistaken.

LETTICE.

My master is a most provoking creature,
I must confess : But, you should do as I
do ; never regard what he says.

B

PIGTAIL.

PIG TAIL.

If he was as bountiful of his cash, as he is of his oaths, he would be the best master in the whole parish of St. James's:—I have this very day received from him about nineteen curses, and I believe an equal number of damns. I hate informers, but I am sometimes almost tempted to take hold of his oaths, and carry 'em before a magistrate—they would come to a pretty sum of money in the year, at five shillings an oath, which I am told is the gentleman's price—At that rate, if he was as rich as a nabob, he would not be able to support his extravagance in swearing—

L E T T I C E.

I neither regard his oaths, or his ill-nature: for my part I am so accustomed to it, that I should be surprised and even displeased at receiving civil treatment from him. I never saw him open his mouth, but curses, threats and complainings issued from it. In short, he breathes nothing but envy, malice, and ill-nature: but what does that signify to us! It is his hobby-horse, and prithee let him ride it.

PIG TAIL.

PIG TAIL.

Then you would not have me pay any regard to what he says?

LETTICE.

None in the least : he gives good wages, keeps a good house, and never suffers his servants to want for any thing ; then why cannot we suffer him to amuse himself in his own way?

PIG TAIL.

Indeed, *Lettice*, if it was not for the happiness of being near your person, I would immediately resign my employment. Nothing but that angelic figure could render it supportable. Promise me, my dear *Lettice*, to accept of my assiduities, and to obtain that happiness, I would even submit to be abused thus every day of my life ; till by our joint labours we have scraped together a sum sufficient to put us into a comfortable public-house, or chandler's shop—(*Bell rings*) But my master rings, I must attend the good-natured creature.

LETTICE.

Mr. Pigtail, mind my advice. Whatever he says to you, let it go in here

and out here (*pointing first to one of her ears, then to the other.*) [Exeunt.]

S C E N E II.

C R A B.

What a night have I had!—What with the winds whistling, chimnies falling, and the screaming of the damn'd watchmen, I have not been able to get a wink of sleep. Those rascals, under a pretence of preventing disturbances in the night, and preserving our property from robbers, are almost the only disturbers of the peace of the night, and rob us of one of the greatest blessings of life, our repose. To add to my misfortunes, when I began to get into a comfortable slumber about eight o'clock this morning, that scoundrel of an apothecary at the next door, began to pelt away with his pestle and mortar for three hours successively. I wish I was to cater for the rascal but one twenty-four hours; his table should be well served—I warrant him I should do for him. He should have ipecacoanha for breakfast, assafœtida for dinner, and arsenic for supper—I would give *him* a sound sleep however, though he has denied me one, a scoundrel, puppy—

Enter

(5)

Enter PIGTAIL.

PIGTAIL.

Did you call me, Sir ?

C R A B.

Call me, Sir ? Yes, rascal, I did call you, and have call'd you this half hour—What, I suppose you was busy in tying up that tail of yours—and I was to wait for my breakfast till you had made a monkey of yourself——Bring me chocolate, rascal.

PIGTAIL.

Yes, Sir.

[*Exit* Pigtail.]

C R A B.

'Tis astonishing that one cannot get a fellow fit to wait upon a gentleman. I am eternally telling this scoundrel of his faults, but all to no purpose. Sometimes I speak a little harsh to him, and then the dog is as perverse and obstinate as a mule—I believe I must turn him off.

[*Pigtail returns with the chocolate.*]

Who made this chocolate ?

PIGTAIL.

My young mistress, Sir.

C R A B.

(6)

C R A B.

I thought it was some of her damned careless doings. Why, it is not warm; I believe it has not been near the fire—Come hither, rascal—look at this cup—How came that spot of dirt on the outside?—answer me that—

P I G T A I L.

I don't know, Sir.

C R A B.

I don't know, Sir! But I'll make you know, Sir—(*throwing the dish at him*) Such people as I have about me are enough to provoke a faint. I think I have a tolerable share of patience; but if I had five times the quantity, I should find opportunities enough to exercise it.

P I G T A I L.

Shall I bring any more, Sir?

C R A B.

No, rascal—I'll have no breakfast—I had better fast than run the risque of being poisoned—Send my daughter to me—

P I G T A I L.

Yes, Sir.

[*Exit Pigtail*

C R A B.

C R A B.

A man that has many servants has many plagues—I would not be harass'd with the retinue of a prince, for a prince's fortune.

Enter S O P H I A.

S O P H I A.

Good morning to you, papa—I hope you have had a good night's rest, and that I have the pleasure of seeing you in perfect health this morning.

C R A B.

None of your canting hypocritical lies, madam, I beseech you. I know very well that your morning and evening prayers are for my dissolution, that I may no longer be a bar to your marrying that empty fellow, Quibble—that murderer of common sense, that pun-manufacturer; that torturer of words and phrases.

S O P H I A.

I cannot but confess, Sir, that I entertain a kind of partiality for Mr. Quibble; but, believe me, Sir, your will shall be the regulator of all my actions; from you, Sir, I derived my existence, my education

cation, and every thing I possess; and rather than give you one moment's uneasiness, I would for ever banish Mr. Quibble from my presence, dear as he is to me. Gratitude only would oblige me to do this, but when the additional bond of filial affection compels me to the performance of it, so far from claiming any merit from this sacrifice, I should think myself a monster to act otherwise.

C R A B.

Why, Sophy, I believe you are a good girl, upon the whole; but I cannot relish that fellow Quibble.

S O P H I A.

Believe me, Sir, if you knew him better, you would entertain a better opinion of him. If integrity, honour, fortune, good sense, and an unblemished reputation are qualifications that will render a man worthy of your esteem—Mr. Quibble has certainly a right to claim it. Unfortunately indeed he has given into a foible, which though innocent in itself, is productive of very bad consequences, that of punning. It is offensive to you, I know, Sir, and is, I believe, the principal source of your dislike to him.

C R A B.

C R A B.

Well, if he can divest himself of that ridiculous habit, I don't know but I may hear what the fellow has to say. I understood he was to come here this morning—Is he in the house?

S O P H I A.

He is in the next room, Sir; shall I call him?

C R A B.

Ay, you may if you will.

S O P H I A.

Please to walk in, Mr. Quibble; my papa is at leisure to speak to you.

Enter Q U I B B L E.

C R A B.

Well, Sir, what have you to *say* to me?

Q U I B B L E.

Words, Sir, words.

C

C R A B.

C R A B.

Words, Sir! So I suppose; but what is the *matter* of those *words*, what do they convey?

Q U I B B L E.

Nothing is the *matter*, Sir, they convey *ideas*.

S O P H I A (*aside to Quibble.*)

I wish, Sir, you would not make a practice of playing upon words in this manner, since you know it is disagreeable to my father—Come to the *subject* of your visit, Sir.

Q U I B B L E (*aside to Sophia.*)

I will, my dear, I'll come to you; you are the *subject* of my visit, and his majesty has not a more beautiful *subject* in the three kingdoms.

S O P H I A (*aside to Quibble.*)

Prithee be serious.

Q U I B B L E (*to Crab.*)

I presume, Sir, you guess at my business: I have long cherished a flame for your daughter, and this flame is now become so powerful, that the united efforts of all the fire-men and engines in England,

gland, assisted by all the waters in the Thame and Isis, would not be able to extinguish it. In short, Sir, I am almost consumed : and am but the cinder of what I have been.

C R A B.

And what am I to infer from all this ?

QUIBBLE.

The inference is natural, Sir—To keep up the allusion, I want you to bestow your daughter upon me by way of an *extinguisher*. Could I but possess her *beauty*, I should possess a great *booty* : give her, Sir, to these *arms*, I'll be her *supporter*, and *shield* her from all injuries : she shall have good *quarters*, and a wide *field* to range in, (for I shall never controul her) and *or* and *argent* at her command—How *crest-fallen* must her old lover, Mr. Withers, appear when he hears of this !

C R A B.

I can no longer hold—Out of my sight, you rascal—If you had millions I should despise you—What an empty fellow !—I suppose now you call this wit—coffee-house wit !—Such conversation indeed may make some of your companions

C 2

laugh,

laugh, from whence you conclude that you have been amazingly clever; but be assured 'tis your folly only that is laughed at.

S O P H I A (*aside.*)

I thought it would come to this—'Tis astonishing that he is not to be cured of this ridiculous folly.

Q U I B B L E.

I perceive, Sir, that you are in an ill *humour*, and therefore I must condescend to *humour* you—and since you are not fond of wit and *humour*, I must endeavour to talk nonsense, though I confess to you I am not in a *humour* to do it.

C R A B.

Be gone this instant—be gone, I say, and never come near me again—I'll give orders to my servants, that if ever they see you sauntering any more *about my house*, they shall duck you in the horse-pond.

Q U I B B L E.

But I expect to be about *your daughter's house*, however.

[*Exit Quibble.*]

C R A B.

C R A B.

A very excellent choice you have made, truly!—Go to your chamber, huffy, this instant, and there remain a prisoner upon your parole, till I please to release you—If you disobey me you shall be disinherited.

S O P H I A.

Sir, I am all obedience. [*Exit Sophia.*]

C R A B.

Mr. Skinnum, my attorney, is the fittest man I have yet seen for a son-in-law. He knows the world, and has not taken very large draughts of the milk of human kindness. In short, he is a man of my own stamp, and will not suffer himself to be imposed upon by the cries of widows and orphans—he is a steady man, a man of fortitude and resolution; and all the clamorous howlings of distress and misery can never melt him, or divert him from his purpose. Such a man is a jewel, and such a man only shall ever become possessed of my daughter. [*Exit.*]

S C E N E

S C E N E III.

Mrs. Crab, Mr. Wheatear, a tenant.

Mrs. C R A B.

I am extremely sorry, Mr. Wheatear, for your misfortune—Lost all your crop, you say!

W H E A T E A R.

Yeas, madam, the floods have washed away every blade. Mine is all pasture-ground—The grass was all cut, and ready to carry away when this misfortune happened. So I cannot pay my rent till next Michaelmas, and I hope you'll speak to maister not to trouble me—I never asked such a favour before, though I have been his tenant a going a five-and-twenty year.

Mrs. C R A B.

I cannot give you much encouragement, Mr. Wheatear, I wish I could. Mr. Crab is not the best-natured man in the world; I will however do all I can to serve you.

W H E A T E A R.

Your servant thanks you—One misfortune never comes aloan, as they say, for just before this flood, I lost nine horses
out

out of twenty by the distemper among the cattle ; if this had not happened, I should have been able to pay maister, thof I had lost my crop ; but now I can't without selling my horses and teams, and then I should be quite ruined, and my poor wife and seven children must want bread.

Mrs. C R A B.

Well, Mr. Wheatear, I'll go with you into the parlour to Mr. Crab, and plead your cause as well as I am able.

[*Exeunt.*

S C E N E IV.

Crab reading a news-paper.

C R A B.

The papers are stuffed with nothing but begging-advertisements. I wonder there are such damn'd fools in the world as to give encouragement to such practices. —It is now become quite a trade. (*reads.*) “ To the charitable and humane.”—damn such cant. “ Thomas Williams, captain “ of the *Susan*, bound from *Hamburgh* “ to *London*, begs leave to acquaint the “ public, that the said ship was cast away “ off *Portland*, and only himself miracu- “ lously preserved, the rest of the crew “ being

"being drowned; but though he has
 "saved his life, he has lost the means of
 "living; as he had laid out the little all
 "he was possessed of in the purchase of
 "goods on board the said ship, which,
 "unfortunately for him, was uninsured"
 —He deserves it, why did he not insure?
 (*reads again.*) "Yesterday evening, be-
 "tween twelve and one o'clock, as
 "Mr. Smith was going from Queen-
 "Square to his house in Bloomsbury, he
 "was knocked down and robbed by two
 "footpads." He was served right, what
 business had he out at that time of night!
 --(*reads again.*) "Yesterday a boat in which
 "were two women and a child, in pas-
 "sing through London-bridge, hit against
 "the Starlings, and overturned, by which
 "accident they were all three drown'd,
 "together with the two watermen." I'm
 glad of it—if people will be such damn'd
 fools as to run into danger, they ought to
 suffer for it. "Saturday last Mr. Worthy
 "distributed among the poor of the parish
 "of St. Albans ten quarters of corn, and
 "fourteen oxen."——Vile ostentation!
 folly! nonsense! he had much better
 have kept his money——"Sunday last,
 as——

Enter

Enter Wheatear and Mrs. Crab.

C R A B.

Well, master Wheatear, what you have brought my rent, I suppose?—I'm glad to see you—Money is always acceptable—

Mrs. C R A B.

No, my dear, Mr. Wheatear has had a melancholy accident. The floods have been so much out, that all his hay, which then lay upon the ground, is entirely washed away—all lost.

C R A B.

What's that to me? I must have my money.

W H E A T E A R.

I hope, my worthy maister, you'll give me a little time—Indeed I'll pay you honestly.

Mrs. C R A B.

Do, my dear, have some compassion upon his misfortunes. He's a very honest man; you have experienced his integrity for upwards of twenty years. 'Till this time, he has ever been very punctual in his payments.

D

C R A B.

C R A B.

None of your impertinence, Mrs. Busy-Body ; I know my own affairs best.

W H E A T E A R.

Do, good maister, have a little marcy--

C R A B.

I shall put it into my attorney, Mr. Skinnum's hands.

Mrs. C R A B.

Let me entreat you, my dear, not to proceed to extremities. Suppose yourself in Mr. Wheatear's situation—Had he been idle and extravagant, and by that means rendered himself unable to make good his payments, I would not say a syllable in his behalf—but as he is not the author of his misfortunes, he is an object of your clemency—

C R A B.

Hold your tongue, I say ; I shall pay no attention to you.

Mrs. C R A B.

If you should, by any severe steps, be the means of the destruction of this poor man, together with his family,
who

who entirely depend upon his industry for support, how will you be able to bear the reflection of it hereafter? how will you be able to look into your own bosom, when so heavy an accusation is lodged there against you.

C R A B.

Well, to convince you that I am not the ill-natured inhuman wretch the world represents me, I will be merciful. I will commiserate his misfortunes.

W H E A T E A R.

A thousand thanks to you, my good maister.

C R A B.

Many a one in my situation would have sent you to goal, but I would scorn to be guilty of such an action.

W H E A T E A R.

I'll pray for you day and night for this kindness.

C R A B.

No, I'll not send you to gaol, I'll not send you to gaol. Your person shall be safe and at liberty—I'll only seize upon

D 2

your

your stock, implements in husbandry, and household goods—I'll put it in no man's power to say that I have acted barbarously.—

Mrs. C R A B.

If this is mercy, this humanity, then tell me what is cruelty!

W H E A T E A R (*weeping.*)

Then I find I must be ruined.

Mrs. C R A B.

You promised, my dear, to make me a present of a sett of china; as good a one as could be purchased for sixty guineas——

C R A B.

I was indeed foolish enough to make such a promise.

Mrs. C R A B.

Mr. Wheatear, I understand, owes you about that sum: If you will have patience with him till he has it in his power to pay you, (and a man of his prudence and industry will, I think, very soon have it in his power) I'll release you from the promise you have made me of
the

the china; and shall be happy, on such an occasion, to be deprived of it; for I should enjoy more true felicity in reflecting upon this circumstance, than in being surrounded with the most superb ornaments of porcelaine, or the most elegant furniture that ever adorned a prince's palace.

C R A B.

This is all lost labour; I am fixed, determined—I'll hear no more.

[Exeunt severally.]

S C E N E V.

Mr. Quibble, Mr. Skinnum, Sophia.

S O P H I A.

You are a favourite with my papa, Mr. Skinnum, and whatever you propose to him will be attended to.

S K I N N U M.

I shall be glad to solicit Mr. Quibble's cause, Madam, to the best of my abilities, without a fee—I say, madam, without a fee.

Q U I B B L E.

QUIBBLE.

That, Sir, I shall never consent to. If you have an interest with Mr. Crab, and have the address and abilities to work him to our purpose, you ought to have a reward for exercising those abilities.

S O P H I A.

Certainly.

S K I N N U M.

Pardon me, madam, I don't desire any such thing. Were I to do this indeed for a stranger, madam, I should certainly expect a few hundreds.

QUIBBLE.

My desire is to marry Sophia; to be possessed of the *fee-simple* of her person and affections, and you, as solicitor in this cause, have at least a right to a *simple fee* for your labour.

S K I N N U M.

But, Sir, I must consult my conscience a little upon this occasion. Mr. Crab is my good friend, my benefactor, a man that I esteem. Would not it be a kind of treachery to obtain his daughter for another person by indirect means? I must
ask

ask my heart that question, that never-
erring monitor—that court of equity
which every man carries about with him.

QUIBBLE.

Equity, Sir! I thought you did not
belong to that court. I have heard you
was in a different practice.

SKINNUM.

True : but I have had dealings in that
court ; though I hope I never shall again.
——I bought a copy-hold estate for three
hundred pounds, which was absolutely
worth thirteen hundred—I never made a
better purchase in my life. The seller
presently after filed a bill in chancery
against me for not giving a valuable con-
sideration—and recovered his estate again.
And all this, after a legal sale, and the
deeds duly executed. He was a damn'd
scoundrel—'Twas a devilish hard case.

SOPHIA.

If a man makes a good bargain, 'tis
very hard he must be obliged to part with
it.

QUIBBLE.

I never had a chancery *suit* but once in
my life, and that *suit* is not yet worn out,
though

though it is almost threadbare. It has lasted me seven years. But, Sir, to the point, here is a purse of two hundred guineas (*giving him a purse.*) Consider this, Sir, only as a retaining fee—Get me a verdict, and then see what I'll do for you.

S K I N N U M.

Hear then my plan of operations—
You must elope, madam.

S O P H I A.

Elope, Sir! what do you mean?

S K I N N U M.

Withdraw privately to some retired place in the country. I shall take the opportunity of your absence, to acquaint your father with the reason of your absconding.

Q U I B B L E.

Her reason for absconding. Why the lawyer is *non compos!* (*aside.*)

S K I N N U M.

That is, I shall invent a reason. You must be content to suffer in your reputation for a short time, till matters are brought to an issue.

S O P H I A.

S O P H I A.

Suffer in my reputation ! I cannot conceive what the man would be at ! (*aside.*)

S K I N N U M.

Why, madam, my plan is this : I shall acquaint your father you have had an amour with Mr. Carlton, (who you know is just embarked for the East Indies) and that you are pregnant.

S O P H I A.

Sir !—Indeed I can never submit to lie under the scandal, the infamy of such a report.

Q U I B B L E.

It will be but for a short time, my Sophy, and you have the satisfaction within your own Breast, that 'tis only a report. I know it is very disagreeable for a modest lady to have *Reports reported* of her, by tale-bearers and people of bad report.

S O P H I A.

Well, if it is necessary I will even make this sacrifice to my affection for Mr. Quibble.

F Q U I B B L E.

QUIBBLE.

It shall be the business of my life to shew my gratitude.

SKINNUM.

When the report of your amour and pregnancy has gained credit with your father, I shall advise him instantly to marry you to Mr. Quibble, lest the news should come to his ear, and your reputation being sullied, he would certainly refuse you. This I know would have the desired effect,

QUIBBLE.

Admirably contrived! this will do!

SKINNUM.

This is the plea that I shall set up.

QUIBBLE.

If he *demurs* to it, I'll suffer myself to be *ejected*.

SOPHIA.

Farmer Wheatear, a tenant of my father's, is in town: he's an honest, inoffensive man: I'll retire with him to his house. 'Tis in an unfrequented part in
Surry,

Surry. I have been there. Two of his daughters are almost women, who will be very assiduous, I am sure, to render my confinement supportable.

S K I N N U M.

Farmer Wheatear has met with misfortunes, and is in arrears to your father for rent, who has given me orders to seize upon every thing he has.

Q U I B B L E.

I'll let him have what money he wants, make him happy, and commit you to his care.

S O P H I A.

Excellent man !

S K I N N U M.

By this means I lose a job though, consider that. But I look upon you to be a man of honour, Mr. Quibble, and doubt not but you will make me a recompence.

Q U I B B L E.

Be assured, Sir, you shall have a *recompense*, and I wish all such honest men were *recompensed* according to their deserts.

[*Exeunt.*]

[28]

A C T II.

S C E N E I.

Pigtail *and* Lettice.

PIG TAIL.

Lettice.

LETTICE.

What?

PIG TAIL.

Shall I tell you a secret?

LETTICE.

Do, what is it?

PIG TAIL.

Will you promise, upon your modesty, never to mention a syllable of it to any body?

LETTICE.

Upon my word I won't. What is it?

PIG TAIL.

I am told when a woman gets possession of a secret, she is never so covetous as to keep it to herself—She lets every one

one of her friends and acquaintance partake of it——They are very generous upon these occasions.

LETTICE.

Pshaw!

PIG TAIL.

Do you think you could act the miser for once, and lock it up in that beautiful chest of yours for your own use?

LETTICE.

Pshaw, I tell you I will—

PIG TAIL.

Why then——But, I'm afraid of you.

LETTICE.

Then keep it to yourself—Some nonsense, I suppose.

PIG TAIL.

Oh! then I'll go about my business.

LETTICE.

Now do, my dear Mr. Pigtail, let me hear it.

PIG TAIL.

PIG TAIL.

Why then, then——is the door shut?
I—I love you, Mrs. Lettice.

LETTICE.

Pshaw! is that all! stupid stuff! a mighty secret indeed—the mountain in labour, and brought forth a mouse——Now I have a secret to tell.

PIG TAIL.

Pray let's hear it.

LETTICE.

That's if I please.

PIG TAIL.

Do pray let me hear it, my dear Letty.

LETTICE.

I promised my mistress not to tell any body in the world, nor I have not told it to a living creature. (Indeed I have not seen any body since.) Do you know that my mistress is going to elope?

PIG TAIL.

Elope!

LETTICE.

LETTICE.

Yes, and I am going to elope too.

PIG TAIL.

You are!

LETTICE.

Yes, I am. 'Tis genteel : All the polite people elope now before they are married. I can tell you another secret, but you must clap a padlock upon your lips—my mistress is with child.

PIG TAIL.

With child—why, you astonish me!

LETTICE.

Astonish you! Is there any thing so very astonishing in a young lady's being with child!

PIG TAIL.

So then your mistress elopes to lye-in privately.

LETTICE.

It is even so—'Tis a sad misfortune, to be sure. I am very sorry for the poor young lady—But it is what we are all liable

liable to—Come along with me, and I'll acquaint you with further particulars.

[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E II.

Enter Mr. Crab, Mrs. Crab.

C R A B.

Feelings!—don't talk to me of your feelings, and so I am to be impoverished, and almost ruined, to gratify your fine feelings.

Mrs. C R A B.

To shut our ears to the cries of the distressed, and not to contribute a small matter to alleviate their misfortunes, would be the worst of ingratitude!—Ingratitude to the bountiful giver of every thing we possess.

C R A B.

I'll tell you what, Mrs. Crab, I am weary of these repeated applications for money, and, till you have learned to curb this abominable vice of bestowing alms, as you call it; I shall take care to keep it in those hands that know how to make a proper use of it.

Mrs.

Mrs. C R A B.

How, Sir! would you deprive me of my only happiness, and treat me in a manner so contemptuous, after having received so large a fortune by my means? Do you forget, Sir, that you had ten thousand pounds with me?

C R A B.

I shall enter into no arguments with you, Mrs. Crab; I shall only say, that I am determined—resolutely determined, fixed—I'll not have my door surrounded every day with a parcel of damn'd beggars.

Mrs. C R A B.

Then am I deprived of one of the greatest privileges for which I would wish to live.

Enter P I G T A I L.

Mrs. Dixon, the widow, with six small children, is waiting at the door for the weekly allowance of two shillings; which she says you ordered her to call for every Saturday.

F

C R A B.

C R A B.

Order the beadle to take her up, and carry her to Bridewell.

Mrs. C R A B.

For shame, my dear!—Bid her wait a little, and I'll come to her.

[*Exit* Pigtail.

C R A B.

The old work I see going on!—If this is not destruction and damnation, what is! Fire and fury, I'll no longer bear it!

Mrs. C R A B.

This woman, my dear, is really an object of compassion; she is not a common beggar—she has lived in affluence.

C R A B.

Then she has the loss reason to complain.—

Mrs. C R A B.

Her husband too was the most affectionate and indulgent man that ever lived. He even lost his life in preserving hers—

C R A B.

C R A B.

The more fool he.

Mrs. C R A B.

Stepping into a boat, she accidentally fell into the Thames; he, though unable to swim, immediately plunged in after her; she was miraculously saved by the waterman; he went to the bottom, and was not afterwards to be found—How would you have acted, my dear, in such a situation?

C R A B.

I wish you would try me, with all my heart——And so you believe this damn'd idle Canterbury tale?——Get out of my sight, I beg of you——

Mrs. C R A B.

But hear me.——

C R A B.

Be gone, I say— [*Exit Mrs. Crab.*
What an enthusiast! What a dupe to the rascally part of the creation—Any distressful tale pleases her to the very soul—she could sit in raptures for an hour together to hear a melancholy story—and she swallows any thing——If a

fellow was to come and tell her that he had not eat, drank or slept for three months, it would go down—damn such—

Enter P I G T A I L.

P I G T A I L.

Here's a letter for you, Sir.

C R A B.

Who brought it, rascal?

P I G T A I L.

The messenger did not tell me his name.

C R A B.

Tell you his name, villain—how was he dressed—was he a servant, or—

P I G T A I L.

He looked like a chair-man, I think, Sir.

C R A B.

And you look like a stupid blockhead, as you are. Be gone.

P I G T A I L

P I G T A I L (*aside.*)

With all my heart—I shall never require a second bidding to go out of your presence.

C R A B (*opens the Letter and reads.*)

“Honoured Sir,”

As I live it is my daughter’s hand—
What can this mean? (*reads on*)

“The reasons for my withdrawing
“myself are of so scandalous a nature, that
“I cannot relate to you the particulars.
“—The world however will soon in-
“form you of the whole, as my shame is
“now so apparent, that it can no longer
“be concealed, and I am astonished you
“have not yet discovered it. I need
“say no more”——No, indeed, you
have said enough already, or the devil’s
in it!——“I beg you will be under no
“uneasiness on my account, for I am
“utterly unworthy of your concern. En-
“deavour, if possible, to forget that such
“a wretch exists as

“Your unfortunate,

“Your guilty daughter,

“SOPHIA CRAB.”

P. S. Pray mention this affair in the ten-
derest terms to my mama.

A

A very pretty epistle truly!—Fire and fury!—--who would wish to be a father—Why did I marry!—Why did I take a load upon my shoulders that every day receives additional weight of misery, and will shortly sink me into the bowels of the earth!—I am distracted—What's to be done! I expect Mr. Skinnum here every moment—I'll consult him upon this damn'd affair—he's my bosom friend—he will pour the balm of comfort to heal this wounded breast—this—
Oh, my child, my child!

[*Exit.*

S C E N E III.

Mr. Crab, Mr. Skinnum.

C R A B.

She is gone indeed, Sir; and I have just received a letter from her, acquainting me that her reasons for taking such a step, were of such a nature, that they were too shocking for her to relate; but that she feared I should too soon be made acquainted with them.

S K I N N U M.

Too soon indeed, Mr. Crab; evil reports quickly spread: her affair is now
become

become the general talk, the common topic of conversation.

C R A B.

Her affair, Sir! what do you mean? what has she done? is she married?

S K I N N U M.

I wish it were no worse.

C R A B.

No worse! Zounds, Sir, explain yourself.

S K I N N U M.

You know, Mr. Crab, I have the greatest esteem for you, would do any thing to serve you,—any thing to contribute to your happiness.

C R A B.

I believe it, Mr. Skinnum; firmly believe it.

S K I N N U M.

Think then how disagreeable a task to wound the bosom of a friend with the most distressful tale that ever was related—Excuse me, Sir, I cannot do it—It must come from some other quarter—My heart is too big to give it utterance.

C R A B.

C R A B.

Good-natur'd man ! Has she committed murder, or treason ?—out with it, for I am prepared to receive any thing. The torments I suffer from mere apprehension cannot possibly be exceeded by a knowledge of the fact, though it should prove to be of the deepest dye—Her letters seem to intimate that she has had an amour with some fellow. Is that the case ? tell me—

S K I N N U M.

So fame reports ; and the fruit of that criminal intercourse is pregnancy.

C R A B.

Oh infamous ! Would she had never been born ! Who was her seducer ? I'll murder the rascal !

S K I N N U M.

A gentleman, who I am informed is just embarked for the East Indies. Having your happiness ever in view, I have hit upon an expedient, which, if carried into immediate execution, things will put on a better face.

C R A B.

Pray explain yourself, Mr. Skinnum.

S K I N N U M.

S K I N N U M.

Mr. Quibble doats upon your daughter—loves her to distraction. This affair, though generally spoken of, has not yet reached his ears—He would joyfully accept her hand, the slur would be glossed over, and your daughter may yet become a comfort to you.

C R A B.

Oh, never ! never ! My child, my only child, on whom I doated to distraction, is dishonoured, ruined—become infamous—To have been informed of her death would have been infinitely less affecting, less horrible. However, as it argues a weak mind to repine at misfortunes ; and, as it is glorious to combat with them, I shall take your advice. But what if Mr. Quibble should have been informed of my daughter's guilt, before the marriage is solemnized ?

S K I N N U M.

Leave that to me. I have a method to prevent that.

C R A B.

But suppose my daughter is not to be found, what is to be done then ?

G S K I N N U M.

S K I N N U M.

Leave that also to my management. I know what route she has taken, and have accidentally met with such excellent intelligence, that I perfectly know where to seek for her.

C R A B.

Excellent man!—Well, my dear worthy friend, I rely upon your endeavours to serve me in this affair.

S K I N N U M.

Depend upon the utmost exertion of my abilities, and, be assured, success will crown them. *[Exit Skinnum.]*

C R A B.

There is a kind of sympathetic kindness between me and Mr. Skinnum, which is not to be accounted for—He is ever ready to do me all the kind offices in his power, and I am as anxious to serve him—and yet I believe instances may be found wherein we have both acted with some degree of cruelty to others—Oh! my daughter, my daughter! *[Exit.]*

S C E N E

S C E N E IV.

A rural prospect near Wheatear's house.

S O P H I A and L E T T I C E.

S O P H I A.

What a delightful situation! How beautiful and extensive the prospect! How fragrant the air, perfumed by the blossoms, shrubs and flowers—Spring is certainly the most delightful season of the year!

L E T T I C E.

Yes, madam, to those who are in the spring of life, and can enjoy it—For my part, it is almost Michaelmas with me.

S O P H I A.

Call it Midsummer only, Lettice—Why, you are not above thirty.

L E T T I C E.

Well, madam, is not thirty a great age? I shall be an old maid in a year's time, if Mr. Pigtail don't prevent it—by marrying me.

S O P H I A.

Heigh ho! I wish Mr. Quibble was here.

L E T T I C E.

Heigh ho! I wish Mr. Pigtail was here. (*aside.*)

S O P H I A.

What do you mock me, Lettice?

L E T T I C E.

No, Madam, I only echoed you.

S O P H I A.

I believe, Lettice, you are a little in my situation.

L E T T I C E.

No, Madam, heaven forbid—No, I was always virtuous—Mr. Pigtail never could prevail upon *me*—

S O P H I A.

Then you believe this report about the intrigue, between me and the gentleman gone to the East Indies?

L E T T I C E.

LETTICE.

I do, madam, because you acknowledged it to be so. I believe you would scorn to say a thing that was not true—though you have made a little sort of a slip. (*aside.*)

SOPHIA.

Then indeed it is not true!

LETTICE.

Not true!

SOPHIA.

No.

LETTICE.

What are you still a pure and undefiled virgin, like myself!

SOPHIA.

I am indeed!

LETTICE.

Wonderful! You amaze me!

SOPHIA.

My reason for undeceiving you in this affair, is because I cannot bear to lie under a scandalous imputation, even to a servant,

vant, especially when I know I can rely upon your secrecy—This is a scheme invented to impose upon my father—By this means my character will be destroy'd, in consequence of which, my father will be glad to get rid of me on any terms, and Mr. Quibble's proposal will be immediately complied with.—

Enter Quibble.

LET TICE.

Now it is time for me to be gone. (*aside*)

Exit Lettice.

QUIBBLE.

My dearest Sophy, I'm glad to see you—and have the pleasure to acquaint you that our scheme is *ripe*, and I hope shortly to reap the *fruit* of it—The thorns are all removed.

SOPHIA.

You rejoice me much, Sir.

QUIBBLE.

I cannot conceive, madam, why I have hitherto been treated thus disrespectfully by that old fellow your father—He behaves to me as if I was a driveler—a mere tool—But I shall soon convince him that
I am

I am an *edge-tool*, and that I am at least *sharp* enough for him.

S O P H I A.

There are many people of my father's disposition, with regard to that foible of yours—(Give me leave to call it a foible, Sir, as it is the only one I ever discovered in you) and therefore you would oblige me not to exercise it any more—It is certainly a bad habit.

Q U I B B L E.

As a *bad habit* then I shall cast it *off*—Nor will I ever be guilty of another pun while I exist. 'Tis a trick I learn'd at college—Being entered into a *league* with a parcel of young bloods, we carried punning to a most extravagant *degree*; we went even beyond our *latitude* in that species of wit. It was absolutely impossible to keep it within *compass*—I am very glad, however, that I have done with it.

S O P H I A.

O, yes, you have done with it, with a witness.

Q U I B B L E.

I have, madam, and would do any thing to oblige you. Well, the business is done—

S O P H I A.

S O P H I A.

What business!

Q U I B B L E.

Your business. Your father has *given* me his consent.

S O P H I A.

Well, and what—

Q U I B B L E.

And I have *accepted* of it—I have authority to take your body into safe custody, and to convey it from hence to the place from whence it came, and from thence to—you understand me—I have the lord chief justice's warrant for it—Your father decrees it; and here's another warrant from Doctor's Commons. (*producing a license.*)

S O P H I A.

I suppose the lawyer will expect large rewards for the services he has rendered us—He'll bring in a long bill, I warrant him.

Q U I B B L E.

Let him, and I'll put in my *answer* to it; and such an *answer*, that he shall not be able to *except* against. But hold, I have the chaise in waiting, and am ready to

to attend you immediately. We can take Jenny with us, as you know you are not *very big*.

Enter Post-Boy.

P O S T - B O Y.

The horses have eat their corn, your honour, and I have put them to—

Q U I B B L E.

We shall be ready in an instant—Go, and get you a dram of brandy.

P O S T - B O Y.

I have just had one, your honour—

Q U I B B L E.

Get another, then.

P O S T - B O Y.

I have had two, your honour.

Q U I B B L E.

Then I hope you'll drive with a little more *spirit*, and not saunter along the road as you did in coming—but don't be above *proof*—not too much of your *fire*.

H

P O S T.

P O S T - B O Y.

No, your honour, I'll tip ye the long trot, and carry you to Stone's-End in the twinkling of an eye. [*Exeunt severally.*]

S C E N E V.

Skinnum, *Mrs. Crab.*

S K I N N U M.

Believe me, madam, your daughter is as chaste as ice—be not alarmed—what we all wish will speedily be compleated—Mr. Quibble is now gone to convey her home.

Mrs. C R A B.

May I rely upon what you say? or is this a tale invented from principles of humanity, to amuse me, and afford a temporary relief from those miseries in which this shocking story has involved me.

S K I N N U M.

By heavens, madam, it is true.

Mrs. C R A B.

Then am I happy.

S K I N N U M.

S K I N N U M.

Mr. Crab swallowed the bait, without the least hesitation, and I have received his orders to prepare the marriage articles, which are already drawn and engrossed. When we have once got his sign manual to it, 'tis all over—we are safe.

Mrs. C R A B.

I tremble for the consequences. I fear he will be highly enraged, when he discovers the trick that has been put upon him.

S K I N N U M.

Never fear, madam ; I shall very easily convince him that he could not have made a more prudent choice—He has an opinion of what I do, and, after the first gust of passion subsides a little, I shall be able to bring about a reconciliation.

Mrs. C A A B.

I heartily wish you may—but I doubt—
[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E VI.

Pigtail, Lettice.

LETTICE.

I cannot bear to hear my young mistress abused in this manner, behind her back, when I know her to be innocent. I have a great mind to let the cat out of the bag.

PIG TAIL.

I had rather cut my tongue out than be guilty of such an action. Why it would ruin the whole scheme, and the ill-natur'd old scoundrel, our master, would have an opportunity of rejoicing at the discovery. As he endeavours to make every one unhappy about him, I shall always be glad to lend a hand to torture him a little.

LETTICE.

But is it not a cruel thing, that a young lady should lie under the scandal of being a loose, naughty creature?

PIG TAIL.

But would it not be a more cruel thing, to deprive that young lady of a good husband

band—Consider yourself in your young mistress's situation (for that's the light in which I always examine things) how would you like to be served so?

LET TICE.

I own I should not like to lose a good husband, but—

P I G T A I L.

Then, prithee hold your tongue, or I shall cancel the agreement that you and I have entered into—

LET TICE.

Why, you are mighty short, methinks—Ever since lady Courtney's woman said you was an handsome well-made fellow, and had a good-shaped leg, you have been so insolent, there is no bearing you.

P I G T A I L.

Come, kifs and be friends.

LET TICE.

Not I indeed—I have no notion of such airs.

P I G T A I L.

I choose to give you a specimen of my future behaviour: a man of honour should

should not deceive a woman. When we are married, be assured I shall never forget my dignity, my superiority.

LET TICE.

Your dignity indeed!

PIG TAIL.

Yes, we are lords of the creation! I'll be the man, you must submit to be the woman; I the lord, you the lady; I the husband, you the wife; I the master, you the servant—I shall in all things act with tenderness and affection—but I must preserve a proper subordination; I must not give up my authority—no—no—

LET TICE.

Mighty pretty indeed!—Let me tell you, Mr. Pigtail, these airs do not become a gentleman that wears his master's coat, a parti-colour'd coat too, with a shoulder-knot bobbing behind.

PIG TAIL.

Peace—on pain of my displeasure.

LET TICE.

None of my family ever were so low as to wear a livery—I have two brothers, who are both gentlemen.

PIG TAIL.

PIG TAIL.

Yes, one is a gentleman soldier, and the other is—what is he?

LETTICE.

A musician.

PIG TAIL.

A musician! (*laughs.*) Yes, he is so—He's one of the fifers in the guards—But, my dear, you and I won't quarrel about the antiquity or dignity of our family—Come along with me, and I'll presently set matters right.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.

A Table, with Pen and Ink, and Writings on it.

Crab, Mr. Skinnum, Quibble, Sophia.

C R A B.

Mr. Skinnum has expatiated much upon your virtues, Mr. Quibble, and represented you in so favourable a light, that I cannot but condemn my former behaviour to you. By bestowing my daughter's hand upon you, I hope you
are

are convinced that I now entertain a good opinion of you.

QUIBBLE.

You confer an obligation upon me, Sir, which time shall never efface from my memory. It is written in the tables of my heart—the tables—

SKINNUM.

Hold, Sir!—The writings are ready, gentlemen, if you are ready to execute—

C R A B.

By all means, shew me where I am to sign.

Enter Lettice hastily.

LETTICE (*to Crab.*)

Sir, Sir, I want to speak to you, before you sign that parchment.

C R A B.

Get out of the room, you jade, or I'll throw something at your head.

S O P H I A.

What does the wench mean? she'll ruin all that we have been doing. (*aside.*)

J E N N Y.

LETTICE.

I say, Sir, 'tis all a trick—I have a secret to tell you.

SKINNUM.

The girl is certainly mad.

C R A B.

Be gone with your secrets, you damn'd impertinent hussy, or—or—

QUIBBLE.

Or I shall make no *secret* of breaking your bones.

C R A B.

Well, now I have signed and sealed, and conveyed to you the sum of ten thousand pounds; and may you be happy together.

LETTICE.

Ay, you would not believe me, till it was too late—The story of your daughter's amour with the gentleman who is gone to the East Indies, is all false—she's no more pregnant than I am.

C R A B.

How! Have I been imposed upon then?

I

LETTICE

LETTICE.

You have, indeed.

C R A B.

And by my friend Mr. Skinnum too;
—then is there no confidence in man!

S K I N N U M.

Mr. Crab, I have a high esteem for you, and for your daughter, and am well convinced I could not have taken a more effectual step to confer happiness on you both. All that you can alledge against me is, that I have betrayed you into an act, for which you will hereafter think yourself under the highest obligations to me.

S O P H I A.

Pardon, my dear Sir, the part which I have performed in this deception—It was done with Mr. Skinnum's approbation, and therefore I did not doubt but it would merit yours.

C R A B.

The joy of being convinced that you are virtuous, will, in some measure, compensate for every thing that has happened.

Q U I B B L E.

QUIBBLE (*to Crab.*)

You and I have played the cheat upon each other very successfully. However, you'll find me a dutiful son-in-law, an affectionate husband to your daughter, and, for the future, as much ashamed of committing a pun, as of picking a pocket.

C R A B.

Then we shall be all tolerably happy. But I have suffered severely in this experiment. The story of my daughter's shame made my existence almost insupportable—

QUIBBLE.

It cannot be doubted, but that an affectionate father would rather lose his daughter, than his daughter should lose her virtue.

*From virtue only springs a woman's fame;
Without it, beauty's but an empty name.*

F I N I S.

GUIDE (A. C. M.)

You and I have played the chess upon
each other very intelligently. However,
you'll find me a cunning and in-law, an
affectionate husband to your daughter,
and, for the future, as much, adorned of
committing a crime, as of picking a
pocket.

C. R. A. M.

Then well I shall be happy. But
I have indicated to you in this experiment
the way of my daughter's future in life.
My existence cannot be responsible for

B. D. L. E.



It cannot be, but that an affec-
tionate father would rather lose his daughter
than his daughter should lose her
virtue.

From your only daughter's father
B. D. L. E.

C. R. A. M.

